

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
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AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 5287

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: DAVID SMITH ADVISES US TO "HANG IN"

1. GRAHAM AND I CALLED ON DAVID SMITH AT HIS HOUSE TUESDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 5, FOR ANOTHER ONE OF OUR GENERAL DISCUSSIONS. SMITH MADE IT CLEAR FROM THE BEGINNING THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED OF IAN SMITH'S MEETING WITH NKOMO ON AUGUST 14 AND EXPRESSED, AS HE HAS BEFORE, RESENTMENT OF JACK GAYLARD IN THIS CASE FOR LYING WHEN ASKED BY DAVID SMITH'S SECRETARY OF FINANCE DAVID YOUNG WHETHER THE VISIT HAD OCCURRED. MUCH OF OUR CONVERSATION, THEREFORE, RELATED TO SMITH'S QUESTIONING OF US ON RECENT EVENTS.

2. DAVID SMITH SUPPORTED THE MEETING WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE AND EFFORTS TO BRING NKOMO INTO A SETTLEMENT.
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HE RECOGNIZED THAT SUCH SETTLEMENT WOULD HAVE TO MOVE FROM THE MARCH 3 AGREEMENT, BUT DEFENDED MOST OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION BEING WORKED OUT ON THE BASIS OF THAT AGREEMENT. HE INSISTED, HOWEVER, THAT HIS GROUP WOULD BE QUITE PREPARED TO INCREASE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT SO LONG AS THE 28 WHITE SEATS COULD BE PRESERVED. THERE WOULD BE

NO PROBLEM WITH THIS. HE MADE A MAJOR POINT OF THE
RESIDENT COMMISSIONER BEING A RHODESIAN. WE REVIEWED SOME
OF THE OPTIONS POSSIBLE FOR A TRANSITION STRUCTURE.
CONTRARY TO GAYLARD, DAVID SMITH PREFERRED A LONGER
INTERIM PERIOD, OF PERHAPS AS LONG AS A YEAR'S DURATION,
RATHER THAN THE OPTION B REFERENDUM WITH EARLY INDEPENDENCE
AND COMMITMENT TO AN ELECTION LATER. HE BELIEVES THAT
WE SHOULD STICK WITH THE CONCEPT OF A CONSTITUTIONAL
PRESIDENT BECAUSE IT OFFERS MORE POSITIONS FOR RIVAL
AFRICAN NATIONALIST LEADERS AND HE CONTINUES TO SUPPORT
THE SENATE FOR THE SAME REASON.

3. WITH REGARD TO OUR PLANS, SMITH SAID WE SHOULD LET
THE DUST SETTLE--THE UNIVERSAL ADVICE GIVEN US BY ALL.
HE BELIEVED THAT WITHIN THREE WEEKS WE SHOULD BE ABLE
TO ORGANIZE AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING UNLESS A BRITISH
ELECTION INTERVENES. THIS, HE ACKNOWLEDGED, COULD
CHANGE THINGS. THE AFRICAN MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL WOULD REFUSE TO GO TO SUCH A MEETING UNTIL
THE RESULTS OF THE UK ELECTION WERE KNOWN.

4. COMMENT: WE HAVE COME TO KNOW DAVID SMITH RATHER
WELL OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS. HE IS REFRESHINGLY FRANK
AND HONEST, BUT HE IS A SUPPORTER OF IAN SMITH AND
ONE WHO WILL NOT EASILY GIVE UP THE ASSURANCES TO WHITES
WHICH IAN SMITH FEELS ARE SO NECESSARY TO A SETTLEMENT.
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